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ABSTRACT

This study examined academic plans, plans for work, and plans to participate in student activities of students (N=1,017) entering Wichita State University in the fall of 1993. Nearly three-quarters of the participating students reported having selected a major. Over 80% of the students reported planning to work while attending the university and 80% indicated that they planned to participate in at least one student activity. Over three-quarters of the students reported that they planned to stay at Wichita State University for at least 2 years. A large percentage also reported planning to earn a bachelor's degree at the university. Other findings revealed that students who had chosen a major had more solidified plans for their association with the university than those who had not. Students with majors planned to stay at the university for a longer period of time and were more likely to plan on earning a degree at the university. The findings suggest that a number of students may be at risk, in the sense that they have not chosen a major, expect to enroll in a limited number of credit hours, and plan to work long hours. (The Wichita State University Entering Student Questionnaire is appended, as are 20 pages of data tables.) (NB)

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Report of Selected Plans of Entering Students at Wichita State University

Fall, 1993

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Associate Vice President
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Wichita State University

September, 1993

CG026012

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Report of Selected Plans of Entering Students at WSU Fall, 1993

John H. Schuh

Wichita State University

This report presents the results of a study of selected plans of students entering Wichita State University for the Fall, 1993, semester along several dimensions:

-Their academic plans;

-Their plans for work;

-Their plans to participate in student activities.

The theory that guided this study is Tinto's Theory of Student Departure (Tinto, 1987) which postulates that students who are integrated into the life of a college in an academic and social sense are more likely to persist while those who are not well integrated are less likely to persist. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) describe academic and social integration this way, "Academic and social integration may describe a condition (that is, the individual's place in the academic and social systems)or an individual perception (that is, the individual personal sense of place in those systems). Negative interactions and experiences tend to reduce integration, to distance the individual from the academic and social communities of the institution, promoting the individual's marginality and ultimately, withdrawal"(p. 53). To a certain degree, the results of this study will point to the extent to which entering students will be integrated in the academic and social life of Wichita State University.

Method

All students who participated in the Summer (June or August) 1993 orientation programs were part of this study. A total of 1355 students were eligible to participate in the study.

A questionnaire was developed specifically for this study. It was pilot tested on a group of students to determine how easily understood each of the items was. The questionnaire, which included several items adapted from the entering student survey conducted by University College for several years, sought answers to very specific questions about the students' educational plans at WSU and the extent to which they planned to work and participate in student activities. A sample of the questionnaire is included as Appendix A.

The questionnaires were placed in the students' orientation folders and were distributed to them as orientation began. Students were asked to complete the questionnaires during their spare time during the orientation program. The completed instruments were collected later in the orientation program.

All data were analyzed using frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, t-tests and Chi squares. The level of significance chosen was .05.

Results

A total of 1017 students participated in the study for a response rate of 75.05%. More students from the June orientation programs (N=531, 52.21%) compelted the questionnaire than from the August programs (N=486, 47.79%). Nearly three quarters of the participants reported having selected a major (N=730, 72.25) than still deciding on a major. Large percentages of the respondents

plan to work while attending the university and also plan to participate in at least one student activity such as a club, student organization or Greek letter organization. Over 80% reported planning to work (N=812, 80.48%), and a similar number (N=799, 80.18%) indicated planning to participate in at least one student activity. The mean number of hours students plan to work is 23.46 hours per week. The number of hours students work should be monitored closely because work can have a negative influence on persistence. Pascarella and Terenzini observe the following about students' working while attending college: "The influence of employment during college on persistence and educational attainment depends to a great extent upon where the employment occurs. Net of student precollege characteristics, full-time or part-time off-campus employment has a negative impact, while part-time employment on campus (usually in the form of a work-study arrangement) has a positive impact" (1991, p. 420).

The large majority of students reported that they plan to stay at WSU for at least two years (N=779, 77.97%). A large majority also reported planning to earn a bachelor's degree at Wichita State (N=794, 80.855%). While not a large percentage, substantial numbers of students do not intend to remain at WSU for more than a year or earn a bachelor's degree at the university. Tables reporting the educational plans of the students participating in this study follow.

Table 1

Student Plans for Their Education at WSU

Item	N	Percent
Take Courses at WSU during the Fall only	19	1.90
Take Courses at WSU during the Fall and then decide about taking more courses	118	11.81
Attend WSU only for first year	83	8.30
Attend WSU for at least two years	779	77.97

Table 2

Degree Plans for Students Participating in This Study

Item	N	Percent
Earn a bachelor's degree at WSU	794	80.855
Earn a bachelor's degree at a college other than WSU	162	16.497
Do not plan to earn a bachelor's degree	26	2.648

Comparing June and August Orientation Participants

Common folklore on campus holds that students who participate in August orientation are more at risk than their colleagues who participate in June for a variety of reasons. This line of thinking has been sustained by this survey. The results indicate that the June students are more likely, in a statistical sense, to

-enroll in more hours

-decide to work fewer hours;

-participate in at least one student activity;

-plan to stay at WSU for at least two years;

-plan to earn a WSU degree.

Tables which present these data are included in Appendix B.

No statistically significant difference was computed when comparing the June and August participants' decision to select a major. About the same percentages of each group have selected a major.

Selection of a Major

Using selection of a major as an independent variable, two differences were computed. The results indicated that students who have chosen a major have more solidified plans for their association with the university than those who have not. They plan to stay at the university for a longer period of time rather than dropping out after a semester or year. Additionally, students who have chosen a major are more likely to plan on earning a WSU degree while students who have not chosen a major are more likely to plan on earning a bachelor's degree at a college other than WSU or do not plan on earning a degree at all. Students who have chosen a major plan on enrolling in more credit hours for the Fall term than those who have not chosen a major. These data are summarized in tables presented in Appendix C. No significant difference was computed concerning the number of hours that students plan to work depending on whether or not they have selected a major.

Plans for Student Activities

Those students who plan on participating in at least one student activity differ from those who do not plan to participate in a student activity in a number of ways. They plan to enroll in a larger number of credit hours, they plan to work fewer hours, they plan to stay at the university for a longer period of time, and they are more likely to plan to earn a degree at WSU. These data are summarized in Tables included in Appendix D.

Influence of Work

The relationship between various independent variables and work plans have been discussed in other sections of this report. In addition, students who do not plan to work are more likely to enroll in a larger number of hours than those who plan to work. A table summarizing these results is included in Appendix E. No significant differences were computed by comparing students who plan on working with those who do not along the dimensions of their planning to earn their bachelor's degree at WSU or their planning to stay at the university beyond a semester or a year.

Discussion

This study examined selected plans for students entering WSU for the Fall, 1993, semester. The results indicated that while the large majority of students plan to earn a degree at WSU, many do not. The majority of students have selected a major, plan to work, and expect to participate in at least one student activity at the university.

A number of students appear to be at risk, however, in the sense that they have not chosen a major, expect to enroll in a limited number of credit hours, and plan to work long hours. The

students comprising this group are at risk, if the Theory of Departure that was identified earlier in this report is accurate. These students remain on the periphery of the university, with limited potential to be integrated either in an academic or social sense. Greater engagement of the students in the life of the university would be an important step for them to take to insure their success at Wichita State.

There may be a variety of steps that the university could take to expedite deeper integration of at risk students into the life of the university. Among these are sustained encouragement of students' participation in various clubs and organizations, development of additional sources of financial assistance, and finding ways of strengthening students' connections with their academic programs. That is the challenge of this report, and perhaps the challenge the university faces is it attempts to improve its retention efforts.

References

Pascarella, E.T., & Terenzini, P.T. (1991). How college affects students. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tinto, V. (1987). Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Appendix A

The Instrument

Wichita State University
Entering Student Questionnaire (Form 2)

We are interested in learning about your educational plans as you enter the university. Please take a few minutes and complete the following questions. We ask that you supply your name and social security number at the bottom of this page but assure you that all answers will be kept strictly confidential. Thanks very much.

1. For the Fall semester, how many credits do you plan on enrolling in? _____.

2. Have you selected a major? Yes _____. No_____.
If yes, what is the major you plan on? _____.

3. Do you plan to work while going to WSU? Yes _____. No_____.
If yes, how many hours per week? _____.

4. Do you plan to participate in at least one campus activity such as a club or organization, campus recreational activity or sport, fraternity or sorority, or some other extracurricular activity?
Yes _____. No_____.
If you would like information about university activities, clubs and organizations, place your address on the back of this sheet.

5. Which of the following best describes your plans for your education at WSU (Please check one answer only):

_____ I plan to take courses at Wichita State during the Fall semester only.

_____ I plan to take courses at Wichita State during the Fall semester and then decide whether or not to take more courses at WSU.

_____ I plan to attend Wichita State only for my first year of college.

_____ I plan to attend Wichita State for at least two years.

6. Which of the following best describes your plans for earning a bachelor's degree (Please check one answer only)

_____ I plan to earn my bachelor's degree at Wichita State.

_____ I plan to earn my bachelor's degree at a college other than Wichita State.

_____ I do not plan on earning a bachelor's degree.

Your name _____.

Your social security number: _____.

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Appendix B

Tables Comparing Responses of June Participants with August Participants

Comparison of June/Aug Orient. Participants' Number of Credits

Unpaired t-Test X 1: COHORT Y 1: Credits/Fall

DF:	Unpaired t Value:	Prob. (2-tail):
991	4.284	.0001

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
JUNE93	515	13.171	2.869	.126
AUGUST93	478	12.354	3.142	.144

Comparison of June and Aug. Orientation Participants' Plans for Activit

Coded Chi-Square X 1: COHORT Y 1: Activity

Summary Statistics

DF:	1	
Total Chi-Square:	14.994	p = .0001
G Statistic:	15.035	
Contingency Coefficient:	.123	
Phi:	.124	
Chi-Square with continuity correction:	14.376	p = .0001

Observed Frequency Table

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
Yes	437	352	789
No	76	115	191
Totals:	513	467	980

Percents of Row Totals

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
Yes	55.39%	44.61%	100%
No	39.79%	60.21%	100%
Totals:	52.35%	47.65%	100%

Comparison of June and Aug. Orientation Participants' Plans for Activit

Percents of Column Totals

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
Yes	85.19%	75.37%	80.51%
No	14.81%	24.63%	19.49%
Totals:	100%	100%	100%

Expected Values

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
Yes	413.02	375.98	789
No	99.98	91.02	191
Totals:	513	467	980

Post-Hoc Cell Contributions

	JUNE93	AUGUST93
Yes	3.87	-3.87
No	-3.87	3.87

Comparison of June and Aug. Orientation Participants' Plans for Work

Coded Chi-Square X 1: COHORT Y 1: work

Summary Statistics

DF:	1	
Total Chi-Square:	10.204	p = .0014
G Statistic:	10.213	
Contingency Coefficient:	.1	
Phi:	.101	
Chi-Square with continuity correction:	9.702	p = .0018

Observed Frequency Table

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
yes	445	367	812
no	83	114	197
Totals:	528	481	1009

Percents of Row Totals

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
yes	54.8%	45.2%	100%
no	42.13%	57.87%	100%
Totals:	52.33%	47.67%	100%

Comparison of June and Aug. Orientation Participants' Plans for Work

Percents of Column Totals

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
yes	84.28%	76.3%	80.48%
no	15.72%	23.7%	19.52%
Totals:	100%	100%	100%

Expected Values

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
yes	424.91	387.09	812
no	103.09	93.91	197
Totals:	528	481	1009

Post-Hoc Cell Contributions

	JUNE93	AUGUST93
yes	3.19	-3.19
no	-3.19	3.19

Comparison of June/Aug Orient. Participants' Plans for Education at WSU

Coded Chi-Square X 1: COHORT Y 1: Plans for WSU

Summary Statistics

DF:	3	
Total Chi-Square:	15.57	p = .0014
G Statistic:	15.612	
Contingency Coefficient:	.124	
Cramer's V:	.125	

Observed Frequency Table

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
Fall term only	8	11	19
Fall, then de...	52	66	118
First year o...	31	52	83
Two years a...	436	343	779
Totals:	527	472	999

Percents of Row Totals

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
Fall term only	42.11%	57.89%	100%
Fall, then de...	44.07%	55.93%	100%
First year o...	37.35%	62.65%	100%
Two years a...	55.97%	44.03%	100%
Totals:	52.75%	47.25%	100%

Comparison of June/Aug Orient. Participants' Plans for Education at WSU

Percents of Column Totals

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
Fall term only	1.52%	2.33%	1.9%
Fall, then de...	9.87%	13.98%	11.81%
First year o...	5.88%	11.02%	8.31%
Two years a...	82.73%	72.67%	77.98%
Totals:	100%	100%	100%

Expected Values

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
Fall term only	10.02	8.98	19
Fall, then de...	62.25	55.75	118
First year o...	43.78	39.22	83
Two years a...	410.94	368.06	779
Totals:	527	472	999

Post-Hoc Cell Contributions

	JUNE93	AUGUST93
Fall term only	-.94	.94
Fall, then de...	-2.01	2.01
First year o...	-2.94	2.94
Two years a...	3.83	-3.83

Comparison of June / Aug. Orient. Participants' Plans to Earn a College Degree

Coded Chi-Square X 1: COHORT Y 1: Degree plans

Summary Statistics

DF:	2	
Total Chi-Square:	6.144	p = .0463
G Statistic:	6.145	
Contingency Coefficient:	.079	
Cramer's V:	.079	

Observed Frequency Table

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
WSU degree	435	359	794
Degree not ...	75	87	162
No BA	10	16	26
Totals:	520	462	982

Percents of Row Totals

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
WSU degree	54.79%	45.21%	100%
Degree not ...	46.3%	53.7%	100%
No BA	38.46%	61.54%	100%
Totals:	52.95%	47.05%	100%

Comparison of June / Aug. Orient. Participants' Plans to Earn a College Degree

Percents of Column Totals

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
WSU degree	83.65%	77.71%	80.86%
Degree not ...	14.42%	18.83%	16.5%
No BA	1.92%	3.46%	2.65%
Totals:	100%	100%	100%

Expected Values

	JUNE93	AUGUST93	Totals:
WSU degree	420.45	373.55	794
Degree not ...	85.78	76.22	162
No BA	13.77	12.23	26
Totals:	520	462	982

Post-Hoc Cell Contributions

	JUNE93	AUGUST93
WSU degree	2.36	-2.36
Degree not ...	-1.86	1.86
No BA	-1.5	1.5

Appendix C

Tables Comparing Responses on the Basis of Decision to Choose a Major

Comparison of Academic Load Based on Major Selection

Unpaired t-Test X 1: Major selection Y 1: Credits/Fall

DF:	Unpaired t Value:	Prob. (2-tail):
985	4.309	.0001

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
Yes	713	13.031	2.946	.11
No	274	12.109	3.166	.191

Educational Plans at WSU Based on Major Selection

Coded Chi-Square X 1: Major selection Y 1: Plans for WSU

Summary Statistics

DF:	3	
Total Chi-Square:	31.981	p = .0001
G Statistic:	29.909	
Contingency Coefficient:	.177	
Cramer's V:	.179	

Observed Frequency Table

	Yes	No	Totals:
Fall term only	16	3	19
Fall, then de...	62	56	118
First year o...	53	30	83
Two years a...	586	187	773
Totals:	717	276	993

Percents of Row Totals

	Yes	No	Totals:
Fall term only	84.21%	15.79%	100%
Fall, then de...	52.54%	47.46%	100%
First year o...	63.86%	36.14%	100%
Two years a...	75.81%	24.19%	100%
Totals:	72.21%	27.79%	100%

Educational Plans at WSU Based on Major Selection

Percents of Column Totals

	Yes	No	Totals:
Fall term only	2.23%	1.09%	1.91%
Fall, then de...	8.65%	20.29%	11.88%
First year o...	7.39%	10.87%	8.36%
Two years a...	81.73%	67.75%	77.84%
Totals:	100%	100%	100%

Expected Values

	Yes	No	Totals:
Fall term only	13.72	5.28	19
Fall, then de...	85.2	32.8	118
First year o...	59.93	23.07	83
Two years a...	558.15	214.85	773
Totals:	717	276	993

Post-Hoc Cell Contributions

	Yes	No
Fall term only	1.18	-1.18
Fall, then de...	-5.08	5.08
First year o...	-1.77	1.77
Two years a...	4.75	-4.75

Comparison of Degree Plans Based on Major Selection Decision

Coded Chi-Square X 1: Major selection Y 1: Degree plans

Summary Statistics

DF:	2	
Total Chi-Square:	16.823	p = .0002
G Statistic:	15.795	
Contingency Coefficient:	.13	
Cramer's V:	.131	

Observed Frequency Table

	Yes	No	Totals:
WSU degree	599	189	788
Degree not ...	102	60	162
No BA	14	12	26
Totals:	715	261	976

Percents of Row Totals

	Yes	No	Totals:
WSU degree	76.02%	23.98%	100%
Degree not ...	62.96%	37.04%	100%
No BA	53.85%	46.15%	100%
Totals:	73.26%	26.74%	100%

Comparison of Degree Plans Based on Major Selection Decision

Percents of Column Totals

	Yes	No	Totals:
WSU degree	83.78%	72.41%	80.74%
Degree not ...	14.27%	22.99%	16.6%
No BA	1.96%	4.6%	2.66%
Totals:	100%	100%	100%

Expected Values

	Yes	No	Totals:
WSU degree	577.27	210.73	788
Degree not ...	118.68	43.32	162
No BA	19.05	6.95	26
Totals:	715	261	976

Post-Hoc Cell Contributions

	Yes	No
WSU degree	3.98	-3.98
Degree not ...	-3.24	3.24
No BA	-2.27	2.27

Appendix D

Tables Comparing Responses of the Basis of Plans to Participate in Student Activities

Comparison of Number of Credits Enrolled in Based on Activity Plans

Unpaired t-Test X 1: Activity Y 1: Credits/Fall

DF:	Unpaired t Value:	Prob. (2-tail):
957	6.427	.0001

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
Yes	774	13.099	2.908	.105
No	185	11.53	3.287	.242

Comparison of Number of Hours of Work Based on Activity Plans

Unpaired t-Test X 1: Activity Y 1: Hours of work

DF:	Unpaired t Value:	Prob. (2-tail):
657	-5.874	.0001

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
Yes	536	22.418	8.239	.356
No	123	27.455	9.927	.895

Educational Plans at WSU Based on Activity Plans

Coded Chi-Square X 1: Activity Y 1: Plans for WSU

Summary Statistics

DF:	3	
Total Chi-Square:	15.987	p = .0011
G Statistic:	14.18	
Contingency Coefficient:	.128	
Cramer's V:	.129	

Observed Frequency Table

	Yes	No	Totals:
Fall term only	16	3	19
Fall, then de...	78	38	116
First year o...	68	14	82
Two years a...	618	129	747
Totals:	780	184	964

Percents of Row Totals

	Yes	No	Totals:
Fall term only	84.21%	15.79%	100%
Fall, then de...	67.24%	32.76%	100%
First year o...	82.93%	17.07%	100%
Two years a...	82.73%	17.27%	100%
Totals:	80.91%	19.09%	100%

Educational Plans at WSU Based on Activity Plans

Percents of Column Totals

	Yes	No	Totals:
Fall term only	2.05%	1.63%	1.97%
Fall, then de...	10%	20.65%	12.03%
First year o...	8.72%	7.61%	8.51%
Two years a...	79.23%	70.11%	77.49%
Totals:	100%	100%	100%

Expected Values

	Yes	No	Totals:
Fall term only	15.37	3.63	19
Fall, then de...	93.86	22.14	116
First year o...	66.35	15.65	82
Two years a...	604.42	142.58	747
Totals:	780	184	964

Post-Hoc Cell Contributions

	Yes	No
Fall term only	.37	-.37
Fall, then de...	-3.99	3.99
First year o...	.49	-.49
Two years a...	2.67	-2.67

Comparison of Degree Plans based on Activity Plans

Coded Chi-Square X 1: Activity Y 1: Degree plans

Summary Statistics

DF:	2	
Total Chi-Square:	20.644	p = .0001
G Statistic:	16.156	
Contingency Coefficient:	.146	
Cramer's V:	.148	

Observed Frequency Table

	Yes	No	Totals:
WSU degree	622	144	766
Degree not ...	130	26	156
No BA	12	14	26
Totals:	764	184	948

Percents of Row Totals

	Yes	No	Totals:
WSU degree	81.2%	18.8%	100%
Degree not ...	83.33%	16.67%	100%
No BA	46.15%	53.85%	100%
Totals:	80.59%	19.41%	100%

Comparison of Degree Plans based on Activity Plans

Percents of Column Totals

	Yes	No	Totals:
WSU degree	81.41%	78.26%	80.8%
Degree not ...	17.02%	14.13%	16.46%
No BA	1.57%	7.61%	2.74%
Totals:	100%	100%	100%

Expected Values

	Yes	No	Totals:
WSU degree	617.32	148.68	766
Degree not ...	125.72	30.28	156
No BA	20.95	5.05	26
Totals:	764	184	948

Post-Hoc Cell Contributions

	Yes	No
WSU degree	.97	-.97
Degree not ...	.95	-.95
No BA	-4.5	4.5

Appendix E

Table Comparing Number of Hours Students Enroll in on the Basis of their Plans to Work

Comparison of Work Plans With Number of Credits Enrolled In

Unpaired t-Test X 1: work Y 1: Credits/Fall

DF:	Unpaired t Value:	Prob. (2-tail):
987	-3.979	.0001

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
yes	794	12.586	3.034	.108
no	195	13.544	2.922	.209